Contribution of forestry sector in GDP

2466. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the contribution of the forestry sector to GDP in last two years;

(b) whether it is a fact that one third geographic area of the country should be brought under forest cover as per the National Forest Policy;

(c) how much area is brought back/achieved as per the approach paper to the Tenth Plan till date; and

(d) what steps Government are taking to achieve the objective of sustainable forest management?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The contribution of forestry sector to GDP for the years 2003 and 2004 is 1.08% and 1.06% respectively. The Central Statistics Organization did not include various non-market and environmental benefits while calculating the contribution of the forestry sector to the National GDP.

(b) Yes, Sir. National Forestry Policy, 1988 envisages one-third of the total end area of the country to be brought under forest and tree cover.

(c) As per the latest State of Forest Report (SFR, 2003), the forest land tree cover in the country is 23.68%.

(d) Government of India has taken the following steps to achieve the objectives of sustainable forest management:-

(i) Management measures like working of forests according to the approved Working Plan, Forest Development Agencies, Joint Forest Management activities etc.

(ii) The Government is also exploring the livelihood opportunities by assigning ownership of Non-Timber Forest Produce to the forest dwelling communities.

(iii) National Parks and Sanctuaries which constitute the Protected Areas have been kept aside for the conservation of wildlife and bio-diversity.

(iv) Guidelines have been issued for rationalizing the felling and tranist regulations for tree species grown on non-forest land to promote large scale afforestation in non-forest areas.

(v) Implementation of National Afforestation Programme (NAP) for the regeneration of degraded forest and adjoining the forest land during the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(vi) Multi Stake-holder Partnerships (MSP) involving state forest departments, the local village communities and private sector has been mooted for afforestation of degraded lands.

Declaration of Saranda Forests as virgin forests

2467. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would agree to declare Saranda forests under Jharkhand State as virgin forest; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no provision under any forest or related law to declare a forest as "Virgin Forests". Moreover, harvesting has been carried out in Saranda forest from 1880 to 1980 as per the prescription made in the working plan. Therefore, the Saranda forests can not be called as "Virgin Forests."

Lakes of Kerala under NLCP

2468. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how many lakes from Kerala are included in the Ramsar site and whether Vembanadu lake from Kerala is included in the National Lake Conservation Programme;